



Governor Bob McDonnell

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Governor McDonnell Highlights Milestones in Chesapeake Bay Restoration Efforts – Attends 2010 Chesapeake Executive Council Meeting in Baltimore –

BALTIMORE – Governor Bob McDonnell joined the leaders of Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions today for the 2010 Chesapeake Executive Council meeting in Baltimore and outlined the significant milestones Virginia has achieved in its efforts to restore the Bay.

Speaking about the Bay and Virginia's commitment to its restoration, Governor McDonnell noted, "The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure and an ecological wonder. As Virginians we have an obligation to preserve and conserve this incredible resource, the largest estuary in the United States. That obligation is shared by all who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed."

He continued, "The Bay belongs to all of us, but it means many different things to many different people. For some, it's their office; for others, their getaway. We fish there, play there, and work there. But our impact on the Bay is not limited to the time we spend on it and near it. What we do in our cities and counties, in many cases hours away, has a significant impact on the health of the Bay. That is one of the reasons I am committed to conserving an additional 400,000 acres of open space in the Commonwealth over the next four years. And it is why I'm looking forward to working closely with my fellow members of the Chesapeake Executive Council in the years ahead. We are all committed to ensuring a clean and vibrant Chesapeake Bay for future generations to enjoy and cherish. While we have taken numerous important steps, we recognize that the job is not complete and we continue to face the challenge of doing more in the future."

Governor McDonnell highlighted eight major areas of improvements that demonstrate some of the recent progress made in improving the health of the Bay. With the change in administrations, the outgoing administration announced it had exceeded its goal of preserving 400,000 acres in the state. Governor McDonnell is committed to preserving another 400,000 acres.

The past year also has brought successes beyond land conservation. By the end of the year nearly \$627 million had been committed to wastewater treatment upgrades, crab populations had increased to a 13 year high and new nutrient management regulations were in place. The 2010 Virginia General Assembly passed and Governor McDonnell approved a dedicated funding source for Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts. An additional \$10 charge per land transaction to the state's recordation tax will go to the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund for installation of agricultural conservation best management practices. For this coming biennium that translates to \$9 million per year. Details on these successes and others are listed below.

Details on Virginia's Recent Chesapeake Bay Successes

Continued Progress with New Nutrient Removal Facilities - Twelve new Water Quality Improvement Fund grant agreements were signed this year to bring the total number of projects to 53, committing a total of almost \$627 million in state cost-share. Three plants brought their nutrient reduction systems on-line this year, bringing the total number of Bay dischargers operating with nutrient removal to 29. Based on the annual compliance plan (February 2010) for dischargers covered by the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Watershed Nutrient Discharge General Permit, projections show the total delivered nutrient loads will meet, or even be lower than, the waste load allocations in all basins for calendar year 2011.

Crab Population Boom - Crab numbers this past winter increased 60 percent from the previous year, marking the second straight year of growth. The increase is due to a landmark stock rebuilding program, including closure of the winter dredge fishery by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and partner agencies. A winter survey conducted by Virginia and Maryland scientists estimates that the population has increased to 658 million crabs, the highest number in 13 years.

New Land Conservation Goal - Virginia met its self-imposed statewide land conservation goal of 400,000 acres over the past four years, preserving 424,103 acres as of winter 2010. Specific land conservation accomplishments include the creation of two new state parks, six new state forests and 13 natural area preserves, and parts of 13 Civil War battlefields were protected. Governor McDonnell has established a new goal to preserve an additional 400,000 acres over the next four years.

Nutrient Credit Exchange Program Established - Virginia has implemented an innovative Nutrient Credit Exchange Program previously adopted by the General Assembly to establish market-based incentives that streamline the nutrient reduction process.

Erosion and Sediment Control Local Program Reviews – Virginia has completed a five-year statewide review of all

locally administered erosion and sediment control programs. Where local programs were found inconsistent with state law, corrective action agreements were completed and shortcomings corrected. As of March 2010, 155 or 94.5 percent of the programs have been found consistent with state law. Well run locally administered programs reduce the loss of sediments and other pollutants from active construction sites.

Advances in addressing NPS from agricultural sources – Use of targeted incentive funds through Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program (VACS) continues to result in roughly 85 percent of available funds being used for implementation of the suite of five "priority practices" across the state. VACS funding for the year beginning July 1, 2010, will not be at levels appropriated for the two prior years. But for the first time ever, thanks to an action taken by the 2010 Virginia General Assembly, there is now a revenue source dedicated to VACS funding. The funding source originates from an increase in the fee for recording land transactions at the local level. Further enhancements in the collection of data for agricultural conservation include the ongoing improvements in a web-based BMP tracking program.

New Turf and Landscape Category of Nutrient Management Certification – Virginia has initiated a new category of Nutrient Management Planner Certification to better meet the needs of professionals developing nutrient management plans for urban/suburban developed lands, such as golf courses, office parks, public lands that receive nutrients, and areas treated by lawn service companies. The agriculture certification category has been offered since 1996 and has 329 certified planners. So far, 65 persons have become certified in the new turf and landscape category. Individuals must meet educational and experience requirements and pass a two-part examination to become certified.

Poultry Litter End User Regulation – New requirements on Virginia end-users of poultry litter became effective on January 1, 2010. The new regulations require enhanced tracking and accounting of poultry litter that is transferred from the farm where the litter is generated. End users are required to store and land apply poultry litter in accordance with the requirements outlined in the amended regulation, which address the proper rate and timing of applications as well as setbacks to environmentally sensitive features for land application and storage of poultry litter.

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